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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/616,731	07/14/2000	John T. McDevitt	5119-00517	6881
7590	09/23/2004		EXAMINER	
Eric B Meyertons Conley Rose & Tayon PC P O Box 398 Austin, TX 78767-0398			YANG, NELSON C	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			1641	

DATE MAILED: 09/23/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)
	09/616,731	MCDEVITT ET AL.
	Examiner Nelson Yang	Art Unit 1641

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 30 July 2004.
- 2a) This action is **FINAL**. 2b) This action is non-final.
- 3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) Claim(s) 413-466,490-492,726 and 730 is/are pending in the application.
 - 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) Claim(s) 413-466,490-492,726 and 730 is/are rejected.
- 7) Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 - a) All b) Some * c) None of:
 1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date 5/02-5/04.
- 4) Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____.
- 5) Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) Other: _____.

DETAILED ACTION

Response to Amendment

I. Applicant's cancellation of claim 467 is acknowledged and has been entered.

Election/Restrictions

II. Applicant's election without traverse of claims 413-466, 490-492, 726, 730 in the reply filed on July 30, 2004 is acknowledged.

1. Claims 413-466, 490-492, 726, 730 are pending.

Information Disclosure Statement

III. The IDS submitted August 30, 2004, has been received, but is not yet available to examiner, and therefore has not yet been considered.

Oath/Declaration

IV. The oath or declaration is defective. A new oath or declaration in compliance with 37 CFR 1.67(a) identifying this application by application number and filing date is required. See MPEP §§ 602.01 and 602.02.

2. The oath or declaration is defective because:

Non-initialed and/or non-dated alterations have been made to the oath or declaration. See 37 CFR 1.52(c). The address of one of the inventors was crossed out and replaced, but the change was not initialed or dated.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

V. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

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3. Claims 413-466, 490-492, 726, 730 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

4. With respect to claims 413, 414, 459-460, 490, 726, it is unclear what would be required for the particles to be configured to produce the signal in the presence of analytes such as phosphate functional groups or bacteria, rendering the claims indefinite. It is unclear if so sort of binding or reaction is involved, or if the particles merely must be capable of producing a signal even in the presence of phosphate functional groups or bacteria. This is also applicable to the configuration of the vacuum apparatus to pull fluid through the cavity during use.

5. With respect to claim 424, it is unclear what structural elements or modifications would be required to configure the cover layer to allow fluid to pass through the cover layer, rendering the claim indefinite.

6. With respect to claim 433, it is unclear what structural elements or modifications would be required to configure the bottom layer to support the particle, rendering the claim indefinite.

7. With respect to claim 443, it is unclear what structural elements or modifications would be required to configure the chamber so that it would be capable of pulling fluid through the conduit when the breakable barrier is punctured, rendering the claim indefinite.

8. With respect to claim 465, it is unclear what structural elements would be required to configure the reservoir to deliver reagents during use, rendering the claim indefinite.

9. With respect to claim 730, it is unclear what structural elements or modifications would be needed to configure the microvalve to control the vacuum, rendering the claim indefinite.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

VI. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(e) the invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.

10. Claims 413, 431, 432, 490, 726 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Wang et al [US 5,922,617].

With respect to claim 413, 490, 726, Wang et al teach a microarray comprising particles (column 6, lines 18-45), located on a substrate that can have channels with beveled openings, on which particles are located (column 13, lines 44-53). Wang et al also teach that a vacuum is applied to the channels to keep the particles in position (column 13, lines 50-55, fig. 2B). Wang et al further teach a scanner comprising a light source (column 15, lines 10-15) and a light detector (column 15, line 20), where light from the light source is reflected off of the array and onto the light detector (column 15-25).

It should be noted that although the vacuum apparatus cited by applicant is directed toward a different intended use, the intended use has no patentable weight in a product claim.

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11. With respect to claims 431, 432, the cavity taught by Wang et al is tapered such that the width of the cavity narrows, such that the width of the cavity at the bottom of the cavity is less than the width of the particle (fig 2b).

12. Claims 413-416, 418-430, 433-435, 439, 444, 459-461, 465, 466, 490-492, 726, 730 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Pfost et al [US 6,485,690].

With respect to claims 413, 444, 490, 726, Pfost et al teach a multiple fluid sample processor comprising a multi-layered fluidic array having microtiter scale reservoirs, connecting microchannels, and sub-microtiter reaction or assay wells (column 2, lines 35-40), where the lower well plate comprises a plurality of wells used to hold reagents, solid supports, particles and/or other materials (column 6, lines 14-21). Pfost et al further teach a vacuum system, such as pump systems (column 6, lines 45-65), which could be utilized to assist in draining and evacuation of excess reagents and wash solvents by applying a vacuum along the lower layer (column 7, lines 15-28). Pfost et al also teach light emitting detection elements arranged in pairs (column 14, lines 53-55) as well as optical elements including LED's, fiber optics, lenses, micro lenses, phase gratings, and other means of detecting the samples (column 11, lines 40-55).

13. With respect to claims 414-415, Pfost et al teach the lower well plate comprises a plurality of wells used to hold reagents, solid supports, particles and/or other materials (column 6, lines 14-21).

14. With respect to claim 416, Pfost et al teach optical elements including LED's (column 11, lines 40-55).

15. With respect to claims 418, 420, Pfost et al teach that the sensor array is comprised of multiple layers, coupled together tightly to form a liquid tight seal (column 6, lines 22-32).

16. With respect to claims 419, 421, Pfost et al teach that the layers can be made of glass (column 6, lines 33-41), and would therefore be transparent to light.

17. With respect to claim 422, the plates can be made from silicon wafer materials (column 6, lines 33-41), and pretreated with silicon nitride (column 15, lines 10-18, claim 18).

18. With respect to claims 423-425, Pfost et al teach that reagents are added to the openings in the top plate, where they are transferred to the rows and columns. Pressure is then applied to yield the capillary valves and load the reaction wells (column 15, lines 46-67) Once the reactions are completed, the spacer gasket and temperature plate are removed and the reaction wells are evacuated, washed and purged (column 7, lines 45-67, column 8, lines 1-10, figs. 10-18). Pfost et al also teach that the layers can be made of glass (column 6, lines 33-41), and would therefore be transparent to light.

19. With respect to claims 426, Pfost et al teach the lower well plate comprises a plurality of wells used to hold reagents, solid supports, particles and/or other materials (column 6, lines 14-21).

20. With respect to claims 427-430, 433, the plates or layers may be releasably stacked (column 6, lines 23-24), coupled together tightly to form a liquid tight seal (column 16, lines 36-52), where each of the reaction wells has one or more entrance channels, and one or more exhaust or drain channels, formed in the intersection of two,

three or more thin plates which are bonded or fused together (column 6, lines 15-21, figs 8, 9).

21. With respect to claims 434-435, Pfost et al teach that a layer may contain features created within structures using photolithography (column 14, lines 55-61).

22. With respect to claim 439, Pfost et al teach fluorescence detection mechanism (column 12, lines 5-17).

23. With respect to claims 459, 460, the limitations recited further limit the analyte, and do not recite what structural limitations would be necessary for the particle to be configured to produce the signal, and therefore have not been given patentable weight.

24. With respect to claims 461, 491, 492, Pfost et al teach a multiple fluid sample processor comprising a multi-layered fluidic array having microtiter scale reservoirs, connecting microchannels, and sub-microtiter reaction or assay wells (column 2, lines 35-40), where the lower well plate comprises a plurality of wells used to hold reagents, solid supports, particles and/or other materials (column 6, lines 14-21). Pfost et al further teach that samples can be detected by reaction on the surface of beads (column 11, lines 1-7).

25. With respect to claim 465, 466, Pfost et al teach a reagent reservoir (column 5, lines 55-60), for filing with a plurality of reagents or other materials (column 2, lines 49-65)

26. With respect to claim 730, Pfost et al teach the presence of microvalves (column 7, lines 1-5).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

VII. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

27. Claims 413-433, 437, 439-442, 444-451, 455, 459-461, 465, 466, 490-492, 726, 730 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Lavigne et al [Lavigne et al, Solution-based analysis of multiple analytes by a sensor array: toward the development of an “electronic tongue”, June 1998, J Am Chem Soc, 120, 6429-6430]. in view of Pfost et al [US 6,485,690].

With respect to claims 413, 444, 490, 726, Lavigne et al teach a sensor array comprising a light source (fig.1), a sensor array with cavities formed within the supporting member (p.6429, col.2), resin beads positioned within the cavities (p.6429, col.2), and a CCD array (p.6429, col.1). Lavigne et al further teaches that the sensor array allows for the simultaneous identification of multiple analytes in solution. Lavigne et al do not teach a vacuum apparatus.

Pfost et al, however, teach that a pressure pumping mechanism or a vacuum pump system may be used to assist in draining and evacuation of excess reagents and wash solvents from the channels and wells of a system (column 6, lines 47-55).

Therefore it would have been obvious to have a vacuum system in the sensor array of Lavigne et al, as suggested by Pfost et al, in order to remove excess reagents and wash solvents during identification of analytes in the solution.

28. With respect to claims 414-415, Lavigne et al teach a 3x3 array of beads, where the beads were positioned within micromachined wells formed in Si/SiN wafers (p.6429, col.2). The array is designed to allow for the simultaneous identification of multiple analytes in solution (p.6429, col.1).

29. With respect to claim 416, Pfost et al teach optical elements including LED's (column 11, lines 40-55).
30. With respect to claims 417-418, Lavigne et al teach a cover plate over the Si/SiN wafers with the wells and a CCD array below the wells interfaced with the sensor array (fig.1, p.6429, col.2), such that a white light source shines through the cover, through the sensor array, and to the CCD array (fig.1).
31. With respect to claim 419, 421, Lavigne et al show that light from the light source passes through the cover plate and the Si/SiN wafer containing the beads held in pits, and to a CCD array, which would indicate that the bottom and top cover layer are substantially transparent to light produced by the light source (fig.1).
32. With respect to claims 420, Pfost et al teach that the sensor array is comprised of multiple layers, coupled together tightly to form a liquid tight seal (column 6, lines 22-32).
33. With respect to claim 422, 437, 440, Lavigne et al teach a CCD array that is interfaced with the sensor array (p.6429, col.2, fig.1C).
34. With respect to claims 423-425, Pfost et al teach that reagents are added to the openings in the top plate, where they are transferred to the rows and columns. Pressure is then applied to yield the capillary valves and load the reaction wells (column 15, lines 46-67) Once the reactions are completed, the spacer gasket and temperature plate are removed and the reaction wells are evacuated, washed and purged (column 7, lines 45-67, column 8, lines 1-10, figs. 10-18). Pfost et al also teach that the layers can be made of glass (column 6, lines 33-41), and would therefore be transparent to light.

35. With respect to claim 426, the cavity is capable of containing the particle (fig. 1B).
36. With respect to claims 427-430, 433, Pfost et al teach that the plates or layers may be releasably stacked (column 6, lines 23-24), coupled together tightly to form a liquid tight seal (column 16, lines 36-52), where each of the reaction wells has one or more entrance channels, and one or more exhaust or drain channels, formed in the intersection of two, three or more thin plates which are bonded or fused together (column 6, lines 15-21, figs 8, 9).
37. With respect to claim 439, Pfost et al teach fluorescence detection mechanism (column 12, lines 5-17).
38. With respect to claims 441, 442, 445, 446, the beads taught by Lavigne et al are poly(ethylene glycol)-polystyrene resin beads derivatized with a variety of indicator molecules (p.6429, col.1) and are 130 μm when dry and 250 μm when wet (p.6429, col.2).
39. With respect to claims 431, 432, the cavity taught by Lavigne et al is tapered such that the width of the cavity narrows, such that the width of the cavity at the bottom of the cavity is less than the width of the particle (fig 1B).
40. With respect to claims 447-449, 455, the sensors taught by Lavigne et al include alizarin complexone for Ce^{3+} , Ca^{2+} , and pH, a boronic ester of resorufin-derivatized galactose for simple sugars (carbohydrates), and fluorescein for pH (p.6429, col.2).
41. With respect to claim 450, Lavigne et al teach that fluorescein, alizarin complexone, and *o*-cresolphthalein complex-one were immobilized on a PEG-PS bead via a dicyclohexylcarbodiimide coupling (p.6429, col.2).

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42. With respect to claim 451, Lavigne et al teach that the resin bound boronic acid was saturated with a fluorescently tagged sugar, where addition of D-fructose results in a displacement of the tagged sugar (p.6429, col.2).

43. With respect to claims 459, 460, Lavigne et al teach that the limitations recited further limit the analyte, and do not recite what structural limitations would be necessary for the particle to be configured to produce the signal, and therefore have not been given patentable weight.

44. With respect to claim 461, Lavigne et al teach a 3x3 array of beads, where the beads were positioned within micromachined wells formed in Si/SiN wafers (p.6429, col.2). The particles produce a detectable pattern in the presence of an analyte (fig.2, p.6430, col.2)

45. With respect to claim 465, 466, Pfost et al teach a reagent reservoir (column 5, lines 55-60), for filing with a plurality of reagents or other materials (column 2, lines 49-65).

46. With respect to claims 491-492, Lavigne et al teach a 3x3 array of beads, where the beads were positioned within micromachined wells formed in Si/SiN wafers (p.6429, col.2). The array is designed to allow for the simultaneous identification of multiple analytes in solution (p.6429, col.1).

47. With respect to claim 730, Pfost et al teach the presence of microvalves (column 7, lines 1-5).

48. Claim 436 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Lavigne et al [Lavigne et al, Solution-based analysis of multiple analytes by a sensor array:

toward the development of an “electronic tongue”, June 1998, J Am Chem Soc, 120, 6429-6430] in view of Pfost et al [US 6,485,690], in light of Bogart et al [US 5,541,057].

With respect to claim 436, Lavigne et al teach that the wells are formed in a silicon wafer. Although Lavigne et al do not specifically state that the wells are reflective, Bogart et al teach that a silicon wafer is a polished reflective material, and therefore the wells of Lavigne et al would be reflective.

49. Claim 438 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Lavigne et al [Lavigne et al, Solution-based analysis of multiple analytes by a sensor array: toward the development of an “electronic tongue”, June 1998, J Am Chem Soc, 120, 6429-6430] in view of Pfost et al [US 6,485,690], as applied to claim 413 above, and further in view of Walt et al [US 6,023,540].

Lavigne et al teach a sensor array comprising a detector capable of detecting a multitude of wavelengths, as discussed above. Lavigne et al, however, fail to specifically teach an ultraviolet detector.

Walt et al, however, do teach detectors capable of detecting ultraviolet wavelengths, and further teach that this allows for the determination of the concentration of particular analytes of interest using spectral measurement (column 2, lines 22-26).

Therefore, it would have been obvious to utilize an ultraviolet detector, as suggested by Walt et al, in the sensor array of Lavigne et al and Pfost et al, so that the concentration of specific analytes of interest could be determined by spectral measurement.

50. Claims 462-464 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Lavigne et al [Lavigne et al, Solution-based analysis of multiple analytes by a sensor

array: toward the development of an “electronic tongue”, June 1998, J Am Chem Soc, 120, 6429-6430] in view of Pfost et al [US 6,485,690], as applied to claim 413 above, and further in view of Fernwood et al [US 4,493,815].

With respect to claims 462-464, Lavigne et al and Pfost et al teach a sensor array as discussed above, but fail to teach the use of a filter.

Fernwood et al, however, teach the use of a microporous membrane placed immediately beneath an upper template (column 3, lines 49-53), and further teaches that the filter allows for the immobilization of biochemical species, and to separate large complexes from uncomplexed species (column 3, lines 15-20, 50-55). This would allow for a variety of biochemical procedures, including identification, isolation, concentration, and purification of various types of species (column 1, lines 23-30).

Therefore it would have been obvious to have included a microporous membrane for use as a filter in the device of Lavigne et al, as suggested by Fernwood, so that a variety of biochemical procedures, such as identification, isolation, concentration, and purification of various types of species could be performed in the sensor array taught by Lavigne et al.

51. Claim 452-458 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Lavigne et al [Lavigne et al, Solution-based analysis of multiple analytes by a sensor array: toward the development of an “electronic tongue”, June 1998, J Am Chem Soc, 120, 6429-6430] in view of Pfost et al [US 6,485,690], as applied to claim 446 above, and further in view of Wang et al [US 5,922,617].

With respect to claims 452-458, Lavigne et al teach PEG-PS resin beads derivatized with a variety of receptors, as discussed above. Lavigne et al do not teach that

the receptors are polynucleotides, peptides, enzymes, biopolymers, antibodies or antigens.

Wang et al, however, do teach using receptors such as polynucleotides, peptides, enzymes, biopolymers, antibodies or antigens (column 3, lines 45-60, column 4, line 10-25, column 5, lines 5-30). Wang et al further teach that this allows for a way to investigate interactions between different compounds or types of compounds (column 1, lines 20-25, column 2, lines 5-15).

Therefore, it would have been obvious in the sensor of Lavigne et al to include more receptors such as polynucleotides, peptides, enzymes, biopolymers, antibodies or antigens, as suggested by Wang et al, in order to be able to investigate interactions between different compounds or types of compounds.

Double Patenting

VIII. The nonstatutory double patenting rejection is based on a judicially created doctrine grounded in public policy (a policy reflected in the statute) so as to prevent the unjustified or improper timewise extension of the "right to exclude" granted by a patent and to prevent possible harassment by multiple assignees. See *In re Goodman*, 11 F.3d 1046, 29 USPQ2d 2010 (Fed. Cir. 1993); *In re Longi*, 759 F.2d 887, 225 USPQ 645 (Fed. Cir. 1985); *In re Van Ornum*, 686 F.2d 937, 214 USPQ 761 (CCPA 1982); *In re Vogel*, 422 F.2d 438, 164 USPQ 619 (CCPA 1970); and, *In re Thorington*, 418 F.2d 528, 163 USPQ 644 (CCPA 1969).

A timely filed terminal disclaimer in compliance with 37 CFR 1.321(c) may be used to overcome an actual or provisional rejection based on a nonstatutory double patenting ground provided the conflicting application or patent is shown to be commonly owned with this application. See 37 CFR 1.130(b).

Effective January 1, 1994, a registered attorney or agent of record may sign a terminal disclaimer. A terminal disclaimer signed by the assignee must fully comply with 37 CFR 3.73(b).

52. Claims 413-433, 490-492, 726, 730 are rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1-31 of U.S. Patent No. 6,602,702 in view of Pfost et al [US 6,485,690].

The patent teaches a system comprising a light source, a sensor array comprising at least one cavity formed within a supporting member, particles within the cavity, and detectors configured to detect the signal produced. The patent does not teach the limitation of a vacuum apparatus.

Pfost et al, however, teach that a pressure pumping mechanism or a vacuum pump system may be used to assist in draining and evacuation of excess reagents and wash solvents from the channels and wells of a system (column 6, lines 47-55).

Therefore it would have been obvious to have a vacuum system in the sensor array taught by the patent, as suggested by Pfost et al, in order to remove excess reagents and wash solvents during identification of analytes in the solution.

53. Claims 413-433, 490-492, 726, 730 are rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1-36 of U.S. Patent No. 6,680,206 in view of Pfost et al [US 6,485,690].

The patent teaches a system comprising a light source, a sensor array comprising at least one cavity formed within a supporting member, particles within the cavity, and detectors configured to detect the signal produced. The patent does not teach the limitation of a vacuum apparatus.

Pfost et al, however, teach that a pressure pumping mechanism or a vacuum pump system may be used to assist in draining and evacuation of excess reagents and wash solvents from the channels and wells of a system (column 6, lines 47-55).

Therefore it would have been obvious to have a vacuum system in the sensor array taught by the patent, as suggested by Pfost et al, in order to remove excess reagents and wash solvents during identification of analytes in the solution.

54. Claims 413-433, 443, 490-492, 726, 730 are rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1-31 of U.S. Patent No. 6,713,298 in view of Pfost et al [US 6,485,690].

The patent teaches a system comprising a light source, a sensor array comprising at least one cavity formed within a supporting member, particles within the cavity, and detectors configured to detect the signal produced. The patent also teaches the use of a vacuum apparatus and a vacuum chamber coupled to the conduit.

55. Claims 413-433, 490-492, 726, 730 are provisionally rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over copending Application Nos. 09/775,342; 09/775,344; 10/427,744. Although the conflicting claims are not identical, they are not patentably distinct from each other because the copending applications teach a system comprising a light source, a sensor array comprising at least one cavity formed within a supporting member, particles within the cavity, and detectors configured to detect the signal produced. The copending applications also teach an embodiment where a vacuum chamber is also included.

This is a provisional obviousness-type double patenting rejection because the conflicting claims have not in fact been patented.

Allowable Subject Matter

IX. Claim 443 would be allowable if rewritten to overcome the rejection(s) under 35 U.S.C. 112, 2nd paragraph, set forth in this Office action and to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Conclusion

X. No claims are allowed.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Nelson Yang whose telephone number is (571) 272-0826. The examiner can normally be reached on 8:30-5:00.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Long V Le can be reached on (571)272-0823. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

Nelson Yang
Patent Examiner
Art Unit 1641


LONG V. LE
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER
TECHNOLOGY CENTER 1600

09/17/07